

Backlash Feared as Slain NYPD Officers Mourned

From left: New York Police Chief of Department James O'Neill, Police Commissioner William Bratton and Mayor Bill de Blasio leave Sunday Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral, a day after two police officers were shot at point-blank range and killed in New York, Dec. 21, 2014. Authorities said the suspect, who later took his own life, had traveled to New York from Baltimore vowing to kill officers.

(Yana Paskova/The New York Times)

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THE BRINKER PUMPS – THE SOMMET BAG

US mulls putting North Korea on terrorism sponsor list

JOSH LEDERMAN
Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — President Barack Obama says the United States is reviewing whether to put North Korea back on its list of state sponsors of terrorism as Washington decides how to respond to what he calls an “act of cybervandalism,” not one of war, against a movie company. Sony Pictures Entertainment, which said it canceled the theatrical release of “The Interview” after distributors refused to show it, pledged to find a way to get the film out. “How it’s going to be distributed, I don’t think anybody knows quite yet,” a Sony lawyer said. The comedy involves a plot to assassinate North Korea’s leader. Obama is promising to respond “proportionately” to an attack that law enforcement blames on North Korea. “We’re not going to be intimidated by some cyberhackers,” he said. The president said the U.S.

would examine the facts to determine whether North Korea should land back on the terrorism sponsors list. “We’re going to review those through a process that’s already in place,” Obama told CNN’s “State of the Union” in an interview broadcast Sunday. “I’ll wait to review what the findings are.” While raising the possibility of a terrorism designation, Obama also asserted, “I don’t think it was an act of war. I think it was an act of cybervandalism that was very costly, very expensive. We take it very seriously.” Obama’s description drew immediate scorn from two Republicans who are longtime critics of his foreign policy. “It is a new form of warfare, and we have to counter with that form of warfare with a better form of warfare,” said Arizona Sen. John McCain. Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina called it “an act of terrorism” and fa-

vored reimposing sanctions and adding North Korea to the terrorism list. The U.S. needs to “make it so hard on the North Koreans that

Only Iran, Sudan, Syria and Cuba remain on the list, which triggers sanctions that limit U.S. aid, defense exports and certain finan-

of international terrorism, a definition that traditionally has referred to violent, physical attacks rather than hacking.

North Korea threatened to strike back at the United States if Obama retaliated, the National Defense Commission said in a statement carried by the country’s official Korean Central News Agency. The statement offered no details of a possible response.

The U.S. is asking China for help as it considers how to respond to the hack. A senior Obama administration official says the U.S. and China have shared information about the attack and that Washington has asked for Beijing’s cooperation.

The official was not authorized to comment by name and spoke on condition of anonymity.

China wields considerable leverage over North Korea, but Obama has accused China of carrying out cyberthefts, too.



A banner for “The Interview” is posted outside Arclight Cinema, in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles. President Barack Obama says the United States is reviewing whether to put North Korea back on its list of state sponsors of terrorism as Washington decides how to respond to what he calls an “act of cybervandalism,” not one of war, against a movie company.

(AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes)

they don’t want to do this in the future.”

North Korea spent two decades on the list until the Bush administration removed it in 2008 during nuclear negotiations.

cial transactions.

But adding North Korea back could be difficult. To meet the criteria, the State Department must determine that a country has repeatedly supported acts



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Republicans fighting to hang onto Senate - in 2016

ERICA WERNER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ascendant Republicans are set to challenge President Barack Obama and the Democrats in Congress come January when they take control of the Senate. But a much tougher Senate election map two years from now could force the Republicans right back into the minority.

In November 2016, Republicans will defend 24 seats, Democrats 10. Seven of the Republican seats are in states that President Barack Obama won with 50 percent or more of the vote in 2012.

It's a stark reversal from this past November, when Democrats were the ones contending with a brutal map, including candidates running in seven states

Obama had lost. Democrats were crushed on Election Day, losing nine seats and their Senate majority. It will be a tough climb for Democrats to make up those losses, and there's no guarantee they will. But coming off November's trouncing, Democrats sound eager about their chances in states such as Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Illinois, while Republicans are preparing more to defend past victories than try to score new ones.

"There's no doubt about it, it's going to be a bigger challenge than 2014," said Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, among the Republicans at the top of the Democrats' pickoff list. "But I think we have a really good opportunity here in the next couple years. We will reach out to the other



Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., right, speaks on Capitol Hill in Washington. Even as Republicans celebrate their Senate takeover, they are making plans to defend it. In the 2016 Senate elections, GOP candidates will be defending incumbents in states President Barack Obama won — a stark turnaround from this past November when Democrats were on the defense. Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va. is at left.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

side. I think Americans, Wisconsinites, will find out that

we're not the party of 'no.'" Sen. Brian Schatz of Hawaii, one of the Democrats likely to be safely re-elected in 2016, said his party already is eyeing a path to retake control of the Senate. Democrats would have to gain a net of four seats if there's a Democrat in the White House — because the vice president can cast tie-breaking votes in the

Senate — or five if a Republican wins the presidency.

"Picking up four or five seats is no small task, but we are certainly in a position to do so," Schatz said. "The electorate is going to be different and I think Democratic elected officials and candidates and most importantly voters are going to be excited for a presidential race, and we're excited to play offense."

It's too soon to say what new issues may arise in the next two years or how strong the economy will be. But presidential elections can favor Democratic congressional candidates by increasing turnout of young and minority voters, and Democrats will not have to spend time distancing themselves from an unpopular incumbent.

Operatives in both parties are looking at many of the states Obama won in 2012, plus a few others, as the most contested places in 2016 where Democrats could try to defeat Republicans. In addition to Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Illinois, the list includes New Hampshire, Ohio, North Carolina and Florida. □

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Backlash feared as slain NYPD Officers mourned

TOM HAYS

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The gunman who fatally ambushed two New York City police officers in their squad car had a long criminal record, a hatred for police and the government and an apparent history of mental instability that included an attempt to hang himself a year ago, police said Sunday.

Ismaaiyl Brinsley approached people on the street moments before opening fire and asked them to follow him online on Instagram, then told them to "watch what I'm going to do," Chief of Detectives Robert Boyce said. A portrait of the shooter emerged as big-city police departments and union leaders warned officers to change their routines and insist on extra backup a day after Brinsley carried out what he portrayed online as retaliation for the slayings of black men at the hands of white police officers.

Investigators were trying to determine if Brinsley had taken part in any protests over the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, whose names he invoked in his online threat, or simply latched on to the cause for the final act of a violent spree. Police said he had no gang affiliation.

Brinsley, 28, had at least 19 arrests in Georgia and Ohio and a troubled childhood

so violent his mother was afraid of him, police said. Brinsley had also ranted online about police and government and expressed despair about his own life,

ternoon, fatally wounding officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu, before running into a subway station and ultimately killing himself. Hours earlier, Brinsley had

calated tensions that have simmered for months over the deaths of young black men at the hand of police. The siege mentality was evident in several memos

necessary." The president of the detectives' union told members in a letter to work in threes when out on the street, wear bulletproof vests and keep aware of their surroundings.

"Cowards such as yesterday's killer strike when you are distracted and vulnerable," the letter read.

Another directive warned officers in Newark, New Jersey, not to patrol alone and avoid people looking for confrontations with them. At the same time, a memo from an NYPD chief asked officers to avoid fanning rage within the ranks by limiting comments "via all venues, including social media, to expressions of sorrow and condolence. ... Even in our most difficult times, we will remain consummate professionals."

Brinsley traveled by bus to New York City on Saturday after wounding his girlfriend.

Before the shootings, Brinsley wrote on an Instagram account: "I'm putting wings on pigs today. They take 1 of ours, let's take 2 of theirs," officials said. He used the hashtags Shootthepolice R1PervGardner (sic) R1PMikeBrown.

The slayings come at a tense time; Police in New York and nationwide are being criticized for their tactics, following the July death of Garner, who was stopped on suspicion of selling loose, untaxed cigarettes. □



New York City police officer Darren Cox, right, accompanied by fellow officers, leaves flowers at a memorial in the Bedford Stuyvesant neighborhood of the Brooklyn borough of New York, Sunday, Dec. 21, 2014 in honor of two police officers who were shot there Saturday. Ismaaiyl Brinsley, who vowed online to shoot two "pigs" in retaliation for the police chokehold death of Eric Garner, ambushed two New York City officers in a patrol car Saturday and fatally shot them in broad daylight before running to a subway station and killing himself, authorities said.

(AP Photo/Mark Lennihan)

Boyce said.

Boyce said Brinsley's mother believed he had undiagnosed mental problems and may have been on medication later in life but detective said they were still trying to determine if he had a mental illness.

Brinsley approached a squad car from behind and fired four shots Saturday af-

shot and wounded his ex-girlfriend at her home outside Baltimore then made threatening posts online, including a vow to put "wings on pigs," and references to the police-involved deaths of Garner and Brown that have sparked racially charged protests across the U.S.

The killings dramatically es-

circulating among the rank and file of the 35,000-officer New York Police Department, the largest in the U.S. A union-generated message warned police officers they should respond to every radio call with two cars — "no matter what the opinion of the patrol supervisor" — and to not make arrests "unless absolutely



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China's wealth finds home in Washington State

MANUEL VALDES
Associated Press

MEDINA, Washington (AP)

— Savvy Seattle-area real estate agents have gained an advantage by paying attention to the growing connections between China and Washington state. "I'm so glad my mother made me study Chinese," laughed property broker Janie Lee, after showing a client from Beijing a \$4 million home in the suburb of Medina. "I've been using it a lot."

This year, Chinese visitors are on pace to top the list of international travelers to Washington. More than half of the 7,300 international students at the University of Washington are from the People's Republic. And a recent top-grossing Chinese romantic comedy featured a Beijing woman who finds love in Seattle. The influx has made its way to high-end property markets, and observers don't expect it to slow down any time soon. "This is just the beginning from just a few years ago. So in a few years there will be even more," Lee said, interpreting for her prospective buyer, Hongbin Wei.

In anticipation, some Se-

attle-area homes are being built or remodeled to improve their feng shui, but other factors can help make a property attractive.

As Wei considered the Medina mansion, Lee asked the seller whether all five bedrooms had their own bathrooms. "Most of the buyers, the Asian buyers, like private suites for their parents or extended family," she said.

Behind their growing economy, wealthy Chinese homebuyers have poured into the U.S., spending \$22 billion on property in the states, tops among all foreign purchasers over the 12 months preceding a March study from the National Association of Realtors. That was up from \$12.8 billion the previous year, when Chinese buyers also took the No. 1 spot. The homes had a median price of more than \$500,000, which again trumped other international clients.

Washington state received a hefty share of attention, ranking second only to California in sales to Chinese buyers.

The China-Washington ties include direct flights between Seattle, Bei-



Debbie Lin, right, of Windermere Real Estate, speaks Mandarin as she shows a home for sale to Amy Hsu, left, a real estate broker who was looking at homes on behalf of a client from China in Bellevue, Wash., as fellow broker Josh Avery, center, walks behind them. Seattle-area real estate agents are taking note of growing connections linking China and Washington state, which ranks second to California in real estate sales to Chinese buyers.

(AP Photo/Ted S. Warren)

jing, Hong Kong and several other Chinese cities, and that proximity is part of what makes the West Coast attractive, said Jed Smith, a research director with the Realtors group. Other foreign investors follow similar patterns, he said, noting that Mexican buyers often purchase in the Southwest, while Europeans tend to favor the

Northeast. Nationally, Smith said, foreign buyers spent about \$90 billion on U.S. property last year, out of about \$1.3 trillion in total sales. The international impact had potential to raise spot prices, but not enough to inflate costs across the U.S. or crowd out local buyers, he said. The recent links — including the film "Bei Jing Yu Shang Xi Ya Tu," which Lee says literally translates to "Beijing Meets Seattle" and references the Tom Hanks, Meg Ryan classic "Sleepless in Seattle" — come as other major U.S. cities have experienced a tourism boost from the Far East. Chinese tourists have been among the fastest-growing and highest-spending U.S. visitors in recent years. In 2013, about 1.8 million Chinese travelers came to the U.S., contributing about \$21 billion to the economy, according to a White House release.

State Department figures show Chinese tourists spent about \$7,000 per person in the U.S., compared with the average of \$4,500 for all overseas visitors.

To encourage such travel and spending, the U.S. government last month expanded the availability of visas to Chinese visitors. In announcing the change, the White House said it could bring an economic impact of \$85 billion by 2021.

In Washington, Visit Seattle, a travel industry group, says more than 100,000 Chinese travelers will visit the state this year, tops among all overseas travelers to the state.

Education has been part of that draw, and veteran Seattle-area real estate agent Tere Foster said it's been common for Chinese parents to buy homes for their children while they attend school, often rooming with other students. □

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US Financial Front: Companies eager to embrace Cuba face hurdles



Signs are displayed at the Cargill turkey processing plant in Springdale, Ark. American businesses have begun imagining ways to capitalize on last week's announcement that the United States will restore diplomatic ties with Cuba and ease curbs on trade with one of the last surviving communist regimes. Cargill aims to sell more corn and soybeans.

(AP Photo/Danny Johnston)

PAUL WISEMAN

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Cargill aims to sell more corn and soybeans. MasterCard covets another site for Americans to swipe credit cards. Marriott sees beachfront property that needs hotels.

And outside Orlando, Florida, Danny Howell just knows there would be demand for his classic Chevrolet parts.

American businesses have begun imagining ways to capitalize on last week's announcement that the United States will restore diplomatic ties with Cuba and ease curbs on trade with one of the last surviving Communist regimes.

Their more ambitious plans would require that Congress lift the U.S. embargo on most exports to Cuba. Given sharp resistance from some in Congress, that might not happen soon. But many analysts think Congress will repeal the embargo eventually.

"It's great news — it's a totally untapped market," said Seth Kaplowitz, a lawyer and lecturer in finance at San Diego State University.

All that said, Cuba experts have a message for any business that might be envisioning easy riches: Be patient.

After years of rigid market

planning in Cuba and the half-century-old U.S. embargo, restoring economic ties to something close to normal is likely to be complex and time-consuming. The United States must change laws and regulations, and Cuba must build an economy more hospitable to foreign investment.

"The Cuban government has a long way to go and a lot more to do," said Jodi Bond, vice president of the Americas at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "I don't think any businesses are under the illusion that this is going to be an easy transition or the floodgates will open." Still, the prospects are tantalizing.

Economists at the Peterson Institute for International Economics estimate that the export of U.S. goods to Cuba could eventually reach \$4.3 billion annually, up from just \$360 million in 2013. And Cuban exports of goods to the United States could reach \$5.8 billion, from zero now.

A full lifting of the U.S. trade embargo could benefit, among others, U.S. farmers, auto and tractor makers, airline and hotel companies and telecom equipment makers. The United States now sells Cuba about \$350 million a year in farm products, including rice corn, soybeans and frozen chicken parts, ac-

cording to the American Farm Bureau. A 2000 law relaxed restrictions on food and medical exports.

Those exports could surge once the United States eases restrictions on financial transactions, which could happen soon. Cuban buyers of U.S. agricultural goods are required to pay up front, though international trade is usually done on credit.

"We have been pretty much hamstrung by the financial constraints," said Devry Boughner Vorwerk, a vice president at Cargill, the agriculture giant. She called the U.S. move "a great first step."

U.S.-based travel companies have been eager to

embrace the Caribbean island, just an hour's flight from Miami. Delta Air Lines, JetBlue Airways, Hilton Worldwide, Marriott International and the Carnival Corp. all expressed interest last week, though most of their plans would have to await a repeal of the embargo.

CEO Arne Sorenson said in a statement that Marriott looks "forward to opening hotels in Cuba, as companies from other countries have done already."

Apple Leisure Group, which books 2 million vacation packages to the Caribbean a year and is about to open its 38th hotel in the region, is developing a plan for Cuba. □

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Associated Press

MIAMI/HAVANA (AP) — Daniela Martinez long figured that someday she would leave the struggles of daily life in Cuba and join her uncle in the United States, but after the events of the last few days, the 18-year-old medical student thinks exile may not be her only choice.

"He always tells me things are better there," Martinez said, gesturing with her chin toward the sea leading to Florida. Dangling her legs over the edge of the Malecon, the iconic concrete seawall where entertainment-starved young Havans gather each evening, she said, "I think things are going to get better."

For a generation that grew up believing the best way to pursue their dreams was to leave the island, the announcement this week that Cuba will open relations with the United States is prompting many to reevaluate their futures. At the same time, Cuban-Americans are considering what the changes will mean for their lives, with some even wondering whether they are significant enough to present a once far-fetched chance for them to return. The five decades of estrangement since Fidel Castro came to power in the Cuban revolution have created an economic and psychological gulf much wider than the 90 miles of the Florida Straits. But the opening of relations, with increased travel and communication, stands to narrow those differences and create new opportunities, especially for young people less burdened by the past.

For Cubans like Martinez, it may mean that becoming

a doctor won't limit her to a meager state salary. For others, there is the hope of Internet access and an end to the desperation that leads thousands to migrate each year. Cuban-Americans, meanwhile, see the possibility of starting businesses in their homeland, connecting with their

did away with a longstanding restriction on overseas travel last year, and knowledge of modern culture has been making its way into the island via TV and flash drives brought from overseas — enough for people here to know what they are missing. Young people increasingly are

and capitalism was savage. Anybody who left was called a "worm."

But Cubans and Cuban-Americans find that when they meet, they have much more in common than expected. They share the same hand gestures, slang and even taste in music. They love baseball

and Las Vegas, places he knows only from TV.

"We want to have new experiences," says the 14-year-old Rivero. "I love casinos. They say they are magnificent."

Yusset Perez, 30, arrived in Miami 10 months ago to join his wife and found work at a college as an administrative assistant and computer lab manager. But now he's thinking about opening a business back home.

"I always wanted to maintain ties, not turn my back from Cuba entirely," Perez said in Hialeah, the heavily Cuban Miami neighborhood where he passed out flyers for the college in front of a discount store specializing in clothing and housewares destined to be sent back to the island.

Nearly everyone in Cuba seems to have some familial connection to the United States, though people from the two countries can have cartoonish views of each other.

Many Cubans are envious of the lifestyle and wealth of their relatives in the U.S., but can also consider them materialistic and arrogant. Many feel Americans don't respect their accomplishments, such as in schools and medical care.

Beatriz Garcia, a 25-year-old who teaches Spanish to foreign students, said that while she hopes to see Cuba have greater access to affordable consumer goods, she bristled at the notion the U.S. is better. "Over there, they may have a better economy," she said, "but here we have good education and health."

Cuban-Americans, on the other hand, sometimes see islanders as poor and unsophisticated, out of step with the modern world. □



Youths hang out at the Malecon in Havana, Cuba, late Friday, Dec. 19, 2014. For a generation that grew up believing the best way to pursue their dreams was to leave the island, the announcement this week that Cuba will open relations with the U.S. is prompting many to reevaluate their futures. Also, Cuban-Americans are considering what the changes will mean for their lives, whether they are significant enough to present a once far-fetched chance for them to return.

(AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

roots and putting aside the bitterness of parents and grandparents who were arrested, exiled or had property seized in the revolution. "My family always said they weren't going back until Fidel died," said Vanessa Garcia, a 35-year-old writer in Miami whose parents left Cuba in the 1960s. "But it seemed like that was something that was hurting us rather than helping us in many ways. It's lasted much longer than anybody thought it would."

Some change already has been in the works. Cuba

on Facebook, even if they don't manage to get online often. And in the other direction, Cuban-Americans have been visiting in greater numbers, often helping to keep their extended families afloat.

Many in Florida grew up hearing their grandparents' stories about fleeing from communism. The revolution, they were taught, brought an end to freedom and ushered in tyranny. Cubans on the island, meanwhile, learned from state propaganda that the Yankees were the enemy

with a passion. "Everybody says their grandmother's flan is the best and nobody knows how to make a Cuban sandwich except the place that they know," said Dave Sandoval, a musician in Washington.

Even after years of propaganda, Cubans are fascinated with some of the most hyper-American aspects of U.S. culture. Paula Pineiro, a 14-year-old high school student and musician, is dying to see the skyscrapers of New York while classmate Otto Rivero wants to see Disneyland

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Iraqi Kurds push into contested northern town



Kurdistan Iraqi regional government President Massoud Barzani arrives to support Kurdish forces as they head to battle Islamic State militants, on the summit of Mount Sinjar, in the town of Sinjar, Iraq, Sunday, Dec. 21, 2014. Iraqi Kurdish fighters pushed their way Sunday into the town of Sinjar, backed by U.S.-led coalition airstrikes against Islamic State militants who captured the town last summer. Loud explosions and intense gunbattles were heard from inside the town. Barzani vowed to crush the Islamic State group as fighting rages in Sinjar.

(AP Photo/Zana Ahmed)

was placed into a body bag.

Earlier Sunday, the president of the self-ruled northern Kurdish region, Masoud Bazani, toured Kurdish positions on Mount Sinjar, where he vowed to defeat the Islamic State group.

"Most of the districts are under our control," Barzani told peshmerga troops. "We will crush the Islamic State."

At least 15 Kurdish fighters wounded in Sunday's clashes were brought from the front-lines to a make-shift clinic on the mountain. The spokesman for the Kurdish forces, Jabbar Yawar, said the fighters were still facing resistance from pockets of Islamic State militants still inside the

town and that it is "far from cleared." He declined to provide more details on the ongoing operation.

Meanwhile, Iraqi counter-terrorism forces launched an offensive Saturday to retake the military airport near the town of Tal Afar from the IS group, said a Baghdad official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to media. In Syria, meanwhile, the U.S.-led coalition carried out at least a dozen airstrikes against IS-controlled towns in the northern Syrian province of Aleppo, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. The group monitors the conflict through a network of activists on the ground.

DALTON BENNETT
Associated Press

MOUNT SINJAR, Iraq (AP)

— With coalition warplanes circling overhead, Kurdish fighters pushed into the contested northern Iraqi town of Sinjar on Sunday, touching off heavy clashes with Islamic State militants who have controlled the area for months.

The battle for Sinjar and the surrounding areas has become the latest focus in the campaign to take back territory lost to the Islamic State group during the militants' summer blitz that captured much of northern and western Iraq. IS also controls a large chunk of neighboring Syria. Last week, Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga fighters launched the operation to retake Sinjar. So far, they've managed to open up a passageway to Mount Sinjar, a long, rugged mountain that overlooks the town. That push allowed some of the thousands

of Yazidis trapped on the mountain since the town's fall in August to evacuate.

On Sunday, peshmerga fighters said they advanced into Sinjar itself. Loud explosions and intense gunbattles could be heard echoing from inside the town as U.S.-led coalition warplanes bombed Islamic State militants from the sky.

"We were fighting inside Sinjar. There were snipers everywhere inside," said 28-year-old Kurdish fighter Nabil Mohammed. "One of them fired a rocket-propelled grenade at us. I ran into a house and I was hit by a sniper's bullet in my thigh."

Mohammed spoke in a field hospital on Mount Sinjar, where he and many of the 20 wounded Kurdish fighters were brought for treatment. Ambulances rushed the wounded to the clinic. Inside, fighters wept as the body of one man killed by a sniper's bullet

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Exit poll: Ex-regime official is Tunisia's new president

BOUAZZA BEN BOUAZZA

Associated Press

TUNIS, Tunisia (AP) — Tunisian polling firms have declared Beji Caid Essebsi, an 88-year-old official from previous regimes, as the winner of Sunday's presidential runoff, cementing his dominance over a country where his party already controls Parliament. The runoff election marks the culmination of a 4-year-long rocky transition to democracy after Tunisians overthrew dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in 2011, kicking off pro-democracy uprisings around the region in what became known as the Arab Spring.



Tunisian presidential candidate Beji Caid Essebsi gives a speech in front of his supporters after the second round of the country's presidential election, in Tunis, Sunday, Dec. 21, 2014. Tunisian polling firms have declared Beji Caid Essebsi, an 88-year-old official from previous regimes, as the winner of Sunday's presidential runoff, cementing his dominance over a country where his party already controls Parliament.

(AP Photos/Hassene Dridi)

consistently come close to matching official results released later, gave Essebsi 55.5 percent of the vote and his opponent Moncef Marzouki, the outgoing interim president, 44.5 percent. Other polling companies gave between 52 and 54 percent to Essebsi.

Marzouki's campaign maintained that Sunday's election was too close to call, and the official results are expected by Monday night. Marzouki congratulated Tunisia for its election and said the country has "banished the fake elections of the past which were won by percentages of 99.99 percent."

Celebrations began immediately after polls closed at Essebsi's party headquarters with fireworks, cheering crowds and lines of cars honking their horns. Essebsi struck a conciliatory note, urging Marzouki's supporters to work with him to rebuild the country.

"The future begins today!" Essebsi said, saluting Marzouki and the people who voted for him. "What is important is what we do today and tomorrow for Tunisia and all its children. We must work hand in hand."

The election has shown deep divisions in the country, not just between Islamists and more secular groups but also between the wealthier capital and coastal regions and the more impoverished interior, which voted for Marzouki.

While the moderate Islamist party Ennahda dominated politics immediately after the revolution in 2011, they were unable to address the serious economic and political challenges in the country, including terrorist attacks.

The Islamists came in second in October's parliamentary election and did not field a presidential candidate, though they tended support Marzouki. □

Only in Tunisia, however, has the transition to democracy remained on track, with elections for a permanent parliament held in October and the first round of presidential elections a month later.

The Sigma Conseil company's exit polls, which have

Belarus' president promises help for Ukraine

MOSCOW (AP) — Belarus' authoritarian president on Sunday promised to help Ukraine as it struggles through its pro-Russia separatist insurgency and economic hardships. Ukraine's year of crisis has been unsettling to Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, who has ruled autocratically since 1994, and wants to fend off any protest movement like those that drove out Ukraine's Russia-friendly president in February.

But Lukashenko also has stalled on a Russian initiative to form a union state with Belarus.

At a meeting with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko in Kiev, Lukashenko said: "I want everything in Ukraine to be good," according to the Belarusian state news agency Belta. "If something is needed from Belarus, say so, and we will do it all for you in a day."

Belarus and Kazakhstan are part of a Russia-dominated trade bloc, which critics say effectively tries to reconstitute the Soviet Union. Ukraine was seen as being a key piece in the trade bloc, but the opposition by many Ukrainians to becoming more closely tied to Russia was a key issue in

the protests that brought down President Viktor Yanukovich.

Yanukovich's ouster distressed much of Ukraine's ethnic Russian population, leading to Russia's annexation of the Crimea region and an insurgency in eastern Ukraine; the death toll in the conflict is some 4,700. Kazakhstan's autocratic President Nursultan Nazarbayev is to meet with Poroshenko on Monday in Kiev, before heading to Moscow where he and Lukashenko are to attend a trade bloc meeting along with Russian President Vladimir Putin. □

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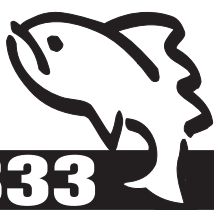


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Rising anger as Nicaragua canal to break ground

PETER ORSI

Associated Press

RIO GRANDE, Nicaragua (AP) — As a conscripted soldier during the Contra War of the 1980s, Esteban Ruiz used to flee from battles because he didn't want to have to kill anyone. But now, as the 47-year-old farmer prepares to fight for his land, Ruiz insists, "I'm not going to run."

Ruiz's property on the banks of Nicaragua's Rio Grande sits in the path of a \$50 billion transoceanic waterway set to break ground on Monday. Nicaraguan officials will start building access roads on state-owned land as the first step in creating a canal expected to rival that of Panama — a project supporters say will directly employ 50,000 people and dramatically boost the country's GDP.

Farmers like Ruiz insist they'll fight "until the last breath" to protect their land. Whether or not landowners do actually take up arms, Nicaragua's government insists it is determined to push through.

The project is slated to open a huge waterway over what is now the town of Rio Grande, an evangelical-dominated community of 2,000 people with only a dirt road amid fields of corn, beans, banana and sorghum. Everything within 10 kilometers (6 miles) would be subject to expropriation.

But the project, which opponents call President Daniel Ortega's pipe dream, is provoking growing anger. Many complain Ortega is giving too much away to HKND, the Hong Kong-based company set to develop and operate it. Landowners fear they'll be displaced without fair compensation. Environmental-

ists accuse the government of ram-rodging past mandated reviews and ignoring the threat that cargo traffic will pose to Lake Nicaragua, the country's main source of fresh water.

country where Ortega's Sandinista party dominates all branches of government, and the president and his wife, the government's powerful communications chief, keep a tight

studied and discarded multiple times since the early 1800s. Backers say it would lift many out of poverty in the Western Hemisphere's second-poorest country. Last year, Ortega's allies

announced its preferred route for the canal, ERM held community meetings in seven cities over 10 days, according to a document on HKND's website.

Some who attended the sessions left feeling they were merely being told what was going to happen rather than asked for input. Those who asked how much they would be paid for their lands were told only that officials would go door-to-door to inform them.

"It was so they could say, 'We did the meetings,' " said Rosa Amelia Mora Novoa, a 37-year-old homemaker in Rio Grande who attended the session in Rivas, capital of the department of the same name.

Late last month, HKND announced the environmental and social reports had been completed and found the impact would be minimal. The reports, however, have not been released for public review even as the day neared for the first turn of shovels.

In a written response to questions from The Associated Press, HKND said the reports would be submitted for approval by the Canal Commission and the government in early 2015.

A person with firsthand knowledge of the impact assessments, who lacked authorization to discuss the matter and spoke on condition of anonymity, said not enough time was allotted for proper study and consultation.

"The studies are going to say that there are a number of things that need to be considered, and some of them simply can't be considered when you've already decided how everything's going to pan out and you've already started doing it," the person said. □



Farmers shout slogans against the construction of the planned inter-oceanic canal as they arrive for a national protest march in Managua, Nicaragua. The project is slated to open a huge waterway over what is now the town of Rio Grande, an evangelical-dominated town of 2,000 people with only a dirt road amid fields of corn, beans, banana and sorghum. Everything within 10 kilometers (6 miles) would be subject to expropriation.

(AP Photo/Esteban Felix)

Earlier this month, residents of Obrajuelo, a sleepy fishing village on the banks of Lake Nicaragua, threw stones at an SUV carrying a Chinese team that showed up to survey the land. The following day, they burned tires on the Pan-American highway, blocking it for hours. On Dec. 10, as many as 5,000 people marched through the capital, Managua. Even though protesters complained that police blocked canal-opponents trying to arrive from the countryside, observers said it was the largest anti-government action in years.

Such political opposition is virtually unheard of in a

lid on dissent.

"What it shows is that a significant part of the Nicaraguan people have not bought into the canal project," said Francisco Aguirre-Sacasa, an economist, former Nicaraguan foreign minister and ex-ambassador to the United States. "A demonstration of that size, despite the impediments that were put in the way of it, shows that the government is playing with fire in this case."

Projected to span some 173 miles (278 kilometers) between the Caribbean and the Pacific, the canal would be the realization of a dream that has been

in Congress fast-tracked legislation granting HKND a 50-year concession, renewable for another 50, to build and operate a canal in return for a payment of \$10 million a year once it's up and running. The law lets HKND develop ancillary projects — ports, an airport, roads, a railway — even if it doesn't get built.

HKND hired the respected U.K.-based consulting firm Environmental Resources Management about a year ago to assess the environmental and social impact of a project that is expected to displace some 29,000 people. In late July, just two weeks after HKND

Tourism suffers in winter of EU-Russia discontent

JAMEY KEATEN

Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Russia's tensions with the West over Ukraine and the slump for the ruble are echoing through the French Alps — and unfortunately for some businesses, just in time for ski season.

Hoteliers, taxi drivers and ski stations in France's wintertime hotspots and beyond say a tourism boom by big-spending Russians in recent years is about to melt away because of Russia's economic crisis, Western sanctions and a drop in oil prices that is keeping both uber-rich and middle class Russians away as the year

ends.

As Moscow and the West began a faceoff over violence in Ukraine this year, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned that U.S and European sanctions would cut both ways. At times, they have: Few places have felt them as have European tourist getaways in the Alps or the Mediterranean. Tourism chiefs cite a one-two punch to Russian travel to the EU: First political strains over Ukraine dent enthusiasm for traveling to the EU, then the financial pain of a falling ruble and oil prices hit Russian pocketbooks.

The pain of falling Russian



The Belle Plagne ski resort in the Savoie region, in the French Alps. Russia's tensions with the West over Ukraine and a slump in the ruble are echoing in the French Alps, just in time for ski season. Hoteliers, taxi drivers and ski stations in France's wintertime hotspots say a tourism boom by big-spending Russians in recent years is about to melt because of Russia's economic crisis, Western sanctions and falling oil prices.

(AP Photo/Patrick Gardin)



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tourism also has been reported in Austria, Germany, Cyprus and England.

In France's Alps, the Russian reticence is yet another hit to a region suffering from a sluggish domestic economy and a recent lack of snow that forced the cancellation of World Cup races in Val d'Isere this month. Many Russians may be staying home for patriotic reasons, such as to test out the Sochi slopes of this year's Olympics instead of traveling abroad, some analysts say.

The ruble has sagged in recent months and hit a record low of 80 to the dollar this week. That depreciation has come alongside a tumble in the price of crude oil — a crucial cash generator for Russia's economy — to roughly half its summertime high of \$107 a barrel. When their pockets were bulging thanks to high oil prices in previous years, Russians rose to outstrip German and Swiss travelers and took fourth place among the most-frequent foreign visitors to the French Alps in winter — after Britons, Belgians, and the Dutch, consulting firm Comete Conseil says.

"We've received fewer reservations from Russian clients this year. We can draw parallels with what happened on the coast this summer, where they too were less present," said Carole Genevray, marketing director for Comete Conseil, which counts

many French Alpine towns as clients. "It's more the geopolitical context than the financial one that has in fact limited Russian visits ... It is Ukraine, plain and simple."

In the Alps both in France and beyond, the impact will likely still be limited: other industry analysts note Russian visitors make up a tiny percentage of the total tourist traffic — far below domestic travelers, for example. Still, Russians' bulging pockets in recent years have made them a welcome customer base for old-school ski slopes eager to drum up new business.

Plus, the Russian holiday schedule, which has links to the Orthodox Christian calendar, brings in many Russian travelers in early January — when many western Europeans are back at work and school, giving an extra influx of cash and extending the wintertime boom for hoteliers and ski stations by up to two weeks.

Adeline Roux, director of the tourism office in Courchevel, perhaps the biggest single mecca for Russian visitors in the French Alps, told France's i-Tele that both super-rich and middle-class Russians may stay away — and not just this year. "Depending on the evolution of the crisis that Russia now faces, we run the risk especially of facing an impact next winter (too)." □



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PALM BEACH - As a part of their annual holiday tradition, the Aruba Marriott Resort and Stellaris Casino has been proudly showcasing a beautiful holiday display, their unique 'Handmade Sugar Village,' in the resort lobby for guests to admire with joy, and to put them in the Holiday Spirit!

This year Executive Chef Teddy Bouroncle together with Senior Sous Chef Charles Wagner and Executive Sous Chef Romeo Penacino created the unique handmade sugar village for guests to admire during the holiday season. Constructed with 400 pounds of powdered sugar, the 5.76 square meters display features 23 delft blue village houses, a



lighthouse, rivers and roads made from scratch. It took Senior Sous Chef Charles and his team one month to create the sugared structures and one day to set up the display in the lobby. The Aruba Marriott Resort invites everyone to pass by and take a photo with the sugar village and hashtag #arugasugarvillage and #arubamarriott when sharing the photos on social media. Happy Holidays! ☐





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Aruba's latest dinner under the stars location, Casibari Grill, is now featured on the Kukoo Kunuku Dinner and Barhopping Tour. Kukoo Kunuku guests can now

enjoy a great local BBQ meal with all the trimmings before embarking on a fun barhopping and nightlife adventure. The newly renovated Casibari, is now open to the public seven days a week serving delicious drinks and an exciting array of menu options. It is full of character with an atmosphere that can't be beat anywhere else on the island!

Take the opportunity to dance, drink, talk, and enjoy the music at Casibari Grill when you stop by on a Kukoo Kunuku tour the next time you are in Aruba. More information and reviews of Kukoo Kunuku can be found on TripAdvisor- it comes highly recommended from travelers all around the world!

For more information or to make reservations, please contact the Kukoo Kunuku at (297) 586-2010 or visit the website www.kukookunuku.com!

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Josef Munzenhofer, better known as Vasty, a local Aruban who kept many of the father's traditional recipes and added new entrees. Vasty is proud to announce that the Buccaneer will be presenting a new menu mixed with old favorites by the newly-hired executive chef with entrees to please

your palette and tempt your taste buds. The international cuisine at Buccaneer is renowned for the fresh fish/seafood locally caught with succulent entrees with tropical flair. The Buccaneer has everything from A-Z and if you're not a seafood lover then join in on poultry, lamb, an-



gus cut beef, pasta and duck entrees. Tempt your taste buds on signature dishes such as Barracuda Meunière, Rack Of Lamb, Pirates Cutlas, Shrimp Trio, Seduction of the Sea, Lobster Thermidor, Twin Tenderloin, Avocado with Shrimp, Bouillabaisse, Ceviche, Lobster bisque &

Escargot. The Buccaneer restaurant is situated between the heart of Aruba's high-rise and low-rise hotels, located at 11C Gasparito. Making a reservation is easy: just call (297) 586-6172 or email us at www.buccaneeraruba.com or buccaneeraruba@yahoo.com. The Buccaneer hours of operation are: Monday through Saturday 5:30-10:00pm with Early Bird Hour from 5:30-7:00pm. And this Sunday, December 28th, the Buccaneer Restaurant will also be open from 5:30-10:00pm, featuring live Steel Pan Music-Don't Miss It!





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maybe this explains its popularity from the start. Crazy Fish Monday is served from 5.30 p.m. till 10 p.m. Bugaloe Beach Bar & Grill is open daily from 9 a.m. till midnight. Start your day of right with a delicious cappuccino, or walk in to enjoy a casual lunch in between sunbathing. A few nights

a week Bugaloe is host to some of the best live bands of Aruba, while you are savoring dinner and enjoying the beautiful Aruba Sunset! Don't forget to make one hour in the day even happier at Bugaloe's daily Happy Hour from 5 till 6 p.m. Reservations are not necessary, just follow your hips to the music and the fun and smiles saluting you! ☐





Pittsburgh Steelers lock up a postseason berth

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — PITTSBURGH (AP) — Ben Roethlisberger passed for 220 yards and a touchdown, Le'Veon Bell added a score and the Pittsburgh Steelers locked up a postseason berth with a methodical 20-12 win over the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday.

Pittsburgh (10-5) faces Cincinnati next week for the AFC North title. Either way, the Steelers will be playing January football for the first time since Tim Tebow and Denver stunned the defending AFC champions in the wild-card round three years ago.

Antonio Brown caught seven passes and a touchdown for Pittsburgh, which has won seven of nine.

Kansas City's Alex Smith passed for a season-high 311 yards but was sacked six times. The Chiefs (8-7) have lost four of five and need to beat San Diego next Sunday and receive plenty of help to make it back to the playoffs for a second straight year under coach Andy Reid.

Falcons 30, Saints 14

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Julio Jones returned from a hip injury to catch seven passes for 107 yards, and the Falcons remained in playoff contention.

Matt Ryan completed 30 of 40 passes for 322 yards and a touchdown, and Devonta Freeman ran for a 31-yard score for Atlanta (6-9), which can win the NFC South by beating Carolina next week.

The Saints (6-9), who committed three turnovers in the fourth quarter, lost their fifth straight at home and were eliminated.

Jimmy Graham fumbled inside the Atlanta 1-yard line early in the fourth quarter.

The Saints had a chance to drive for a winning score inside the final three minutes, but Robert McClain's interception of Drew Brees in Saints territory set up a field goal, and Osi Umenyiora returned Brees' fumble for an 86-yard TD as time expired.

Panthers 17, Browns 13

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Cam Newton threw for one touchdown and ran for another as Carolina (6-8) took over sole possession of first place in the NFC South. The victory sets up the winner-take-all showdown next Sunday at Atlanta.

The winner will join the 2010 Seattle Seahawks as the only teams in NFL history to reach the postseason in a non-strike-shortened season with a losing record.

Newton threw for 201 yards and ran for 63 yards just 12 days after the quarterback suffered two fractures in his lower back following an automobile accident. Jonathan Stewart ran for 122 yards and caught a 9-yard touchdown pass from Newton.

Johnny Manziel made his second NFL start for Cleveland (7-8) but left with 1:49 remaining in the first half with a hamstring injury and did not return.

Lions 20, Bears 14

CHICAGO (AP) — Joique Bell scored the go-ahead touchdown on a sweet run in the fourth quarter, and Ndamukong Suh had two sacks.

Calvin Johnson added six catches for 103 yards for Detroit (11-4), which came away with a narrow victory over a struggling team after locking up its second trip to the postseason in 15 years.

Continued on Page 18



Pittsburgh Steelers cornerback William Gay (22) breaks up a pass intended for Kansas City Chiefs wide receiver Albert Wilson (12) during the second half of an NFL football game in Pittsburgh, Sunday, Dec. 21, 2014.

(AP Photo/Don Wright)



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NFL Roundup

The Bears (5-10) benched quarterback Jay Cutler this week in favor of the undistinguished Clausen. The Lions secured a play-off spot with Philadelphia's loss to Washington on Saturday. They were hoping to lock up their first division championship since 1993. But because the Packers beat Tampa Bay, the NFC North race will come down to next week's game at

Green Bay. Matthew Stafford overcame two interceptions and completed 22 of 39 passes for 243 yards. He hit the 4,000-yard mark for the fourth straight year.

Patriots 17, Jets 16

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — Jonas Gray scored the go-ahead touchdown on a 1-yard run early in the fourth quarter after the Patriots intercepted Geno Smith, and New England clinched a first-round play-

off bye.

Tom Brady threw a 3-yard TD pass to Rob Gronkowski for the Patriots (12-3), who could earn home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs if Denver loses at Cincinnati on Monday night.

With the Jets (3-12) leading 13-10 late in the third quarter, Smith's pass for Jace Amaro hung in the air for an easy interception by Jamie Collins — and led to Gray's score minutes later. Nick Folk's 52-yard field



Carolina Panthers' Cam Newton (1) is tackled by Cleveland Browns' Donte Whitner (31) and Pierre Desir (26) in the first half of an NFL football game in Charlotte, N.C., Sunday, Dec. 21, 2014. (AP Photo/Bob Leverone)

goal attempt could have given New York a lead with just over five minutes left, but it appeared to be partially blocked and fell short. Brady and the Patriots then ran out the clock.

Packers 20, Buccaneers 3

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Aaron Rodgers threw for 318 yards and one touchdown to help the Packers clinch a wild-card playoff berth.

Eddie Lacy scored on a 44-yard run, Jordy Nelson caught a 1-yard TD pass in the fourth quarter and had nine receptions for 113 yards, while Randall Cobb finished with 11 catches for 131 yards.

A 21-13 loss to Buffalo a week ago cost Green Bay (11-4) sole possession of first

place in the division. It also hurt its chances for earning home-field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs. Green Bay closes the regular season at home against Detroit, and a victory will give the Packers another NFC North crown. The Bucs (2-13) have lost five straight and remain in contention for the first overall pick in the 2015 draft.

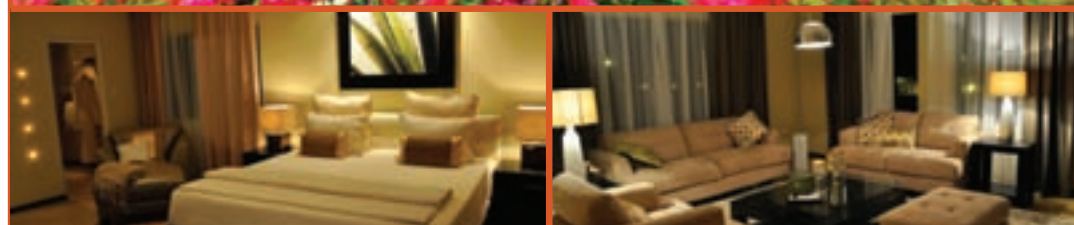
Texans 25, Ravens 13

HOUSTON (AP) — Running back Arian Foster threw a touchdown pass, Randy Bullock made a franchise-record six field goals and Houston's defense dominated to keep slim playoff hopes alive.

Continued on Next Page



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NFL Roundup

The Ravens (9-6) now need some help next week to get into the postseason after Joe Flacco threw a season-high three interceptions and the offense struggled all day. Houston (8-7) remains in the hunt with the victory, but needs several teams to lose next week. With three quarterbacks hurt, the Texans started Case Keenum, who got his first win in nine NFL starts. Foster ran for 96 yards. But his highlight came when he took a pitch from Keenum and, with a defender in his face, threw a 5-yard touchdown pass to C.J. Fiedorowicz to make it 16-0 in the second quarter.

Dolphins 37, Vikings 35
MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP)

— Dolphins owner Stephen Ross, buoyed by a thrilling comeback win, said Joe Philbin will return as coach next season. Ross made his announcement in the locker room shortly after the Dolphins won on a safety. Rookie Terrence Fede blocked a punt for a safety with 41 seconds left, and Ryan Tannehill threw four touchdown passes. The Dolphins overcame a 14-0 deficit to take the lead, but trailed again after giving up 15 points in an 11-second span in the fourth quarter. Philbin's job had been considered in jeopardy because the Dolphins will miss the playoffs for the sixth year in a row. But they're 8-7 and have a shot at a winning season if not the playoffs. Minnesota fell to 6-9. □



New England Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski (87) scores a touchdown as New York Jets' Calvin Pryor (25) tackles him during the first half of an NFL football game Sunday, Dec. 21, 2014, in East Rutherford, N.J.

(AP Photo/Bill Kostroun)

Willett earns spot in Masters



Danny Willett of England, left, poses with his wife Nicole, right, with the trophy after winning the Nedbank Golf Challenge, at the Gary Player Country Club in Sun City, South Africa.
(AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)

LONDON (AP) — Danny Willett of England is going to the Masters for the first time with a little help from the world ranking formula. Willett, who won the Nedbank Challenge in South Africa two weeks ago, is at No. 51 in the world in this week's ranking. The Dubai Open on the Asian Tour ended Sunday as the final official golf tournament of the year. Willett did not play, but because points are gradually reduced at differing rates in the world ranking formula, Willett will move up to No. 50 in the final ranking of the year that is published Dec. 29. The top 50 at the end of each year earn invitations to the Masters. Willett will finish narrowly ahead of Tommy Fleetwood of England, who missed the cut in the Dubai Open. □

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No.23 Utah cruises to a Las Vegas Bowl victory



Utah quarterback Travis Wilson (7) runs for a touchdown against Colorado State during the first half of the Las Vegas Bowl NCAA college football game Saturday, Dec. 20, 2014, in Las Vegas. The No. 23 Utes enjoyed a 45-10 rout of Colorado State in the Las Vegas Bowl.

(AP Photo/John Locher)

The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Utah quarterback Travis Wilson ran for three touchdowns and passed for another in college football Saturday, leading the No. 23 Utes to a 45-10 rout of Colorado State in the Las Vegas Bowl. Wilson rushed for a season-high 91 yards on 11 carries and completed 17 of 26 passes for 158 yards. Utah (9-4) scored three times in the first quarter and finished with 548 total yards, including 359 on the ground. Devontae Booker ran for 162 yards and a TD and Troy McCormick ran for 86. Colorado State (10-3) fell behind in the first three minutes and never got its vaunted offense in gear. Garrett Grayson completed 21 of 35 passes for 242 yards, but he was unable to avoid Utah's rush in the second half when the Rams were forced to throw the ball.

At Boise, Idaho, Shayne Davern ran for a career-high 101 yards and two touchdowns and Air Force beat Western Michigan 38-

24 in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl.

Air Force finished the season 10-3 after going 2-10 last year. Miami of Ohio was the last previous team to follow a 10-loss season with 10 victories, going from 1-11 in 2009 to 10-4 in 2010. Dexter Walker returned a fumble 60 yards for a touchdown for Air Force. Terrance Broadway passed for 227 yards and a touchdown, Hunter Stover kicked three field goals and Louisiana-Lafayette beat Nevada 16-3 in the New Orleans Bowl.

Stover made a career-long 46-yard field goal in the first half and added kicks of 35 and 30 yards to help the Ragin' Cajuns (9-4) completed their fourth consecutive nine-victory season with their fourth straight New Orleans Bowl win.

Nick Vigil ran for a touchdown and combined with brother Zach to make 16 tackles in Utah State's 21-6 victory over UTEP in the New Mexico Bowl, to win a bowl game for the third straight year.



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In The Paint:

As losses mount, Knicks cling to their plan - and patience

SCOTT CACCIOLA

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NEW YORK - Phil Jackson was back in his familiar spot last Tuesday night, a few rows deep at Madison Square Garden, taking in another loss. The New York Knicks have been collecting them like dust bunnies this season, as opponents exploit them from the perimeter and in the lane and from all spots in between.

Jackson, nine months into his job as team president, is unaccustomed to ceding control, but he has largely left coach Derek Fisher to fend for himself with a patchwork roster barreling toward records for futility. Sure, there are regular meetings and strategy sessions. But Jackson tends not to interfere. The day-to-day stuff is Fisher's domain, for better or worse.

Even as both men grapple with the grim reality - an embarrassing start to the season with little evidence that the Knicks will approach respectability - Jackson sits and watches. In fairness, those may be the only things he can do. Hamstrung by the handiwork of previous regimes, Jackson appears determined to wait it out until next summer, when the Knicks will dip well below the salary cap and finally have money to spend. The team's most valuable assets are its expiring contracts, nine in all.

So Jackson continues to preach patience as his grace period limps toward the finish. It is a high-stakes waiting game, after all. There are no guarantees, not in free agency and not in the draft. But what choice does Jackson have? The future will hinge on the offseason.

Stu Jackson, a former

Knicks coach who has also worked as a league executive, said Phil Jackson would be wise to stick with his long-term vision. Losing is no fun. Neither is dealing with mounting pressure from fans (and from Charles Barkley) to repair the assortment of mismatched parts that takes the court each game.

But his perspective must be

from people outside the organization."

Phil Jackson is aware of the criticism. On Thursday, he went on Twitter and responded to a reporter who had posted a link to an article that panned the Tyson Chandler trade. Jackson wrote, in part, that he was OK with the deal, that Chandler fit with the Dallas Mavericks and that

team. In response to an interview request, the owner James L. Dolan released a statement through a spokesman: "Nothing has changed at all since we brought Phil back to NY. We appreciate the patience of our fans as Phil implements his plan."

The 2014-15 season now revolves around those twin concepts: patience and

he would prefer to stay with the Cleveland Cavaliers, while leaving the door ajar. On Thursday, the Mavericks acquired Rajon Rondo from the Boston Celtics. He seems very likely to stay with Dallas.

A shrinking market is bad enough. But there is another concern for Jackson: whether the Knicks' general dysfunction this season will dissuade free agents from wanting to go anywhere near this hazmat site. Jackson acknowledged as much this month in one of his semiregular news conferences with reporters who cover the team.

"I'm not happy about that," he said, adding that he wanted the players to "consistently perform at a level in this system of offense to demonstrate that they're progressing, what the advantages are to what we're doing." In other words, he had hoped that the current roster would be an advertisement for the triangle. It has not gone so well. "If you're going to be a high-profile free agent who signs for a lot of money, you're going to be expected to win," said Reggie Miller, a former player and an analyst for Turner Sports. "So it would be nice for Derek and Phil to have a foundation to pitch to those guys: 'Hey, this is how we play.' So sure, it could have an effect."

Jackson has made other miscalculations. When he sent Chandler to the Mavericks as part of a multiplayer deal over the summer, Jackson cited chemistry issues. But after a season during which he was hindered by injuries and frustrated by the team's defensive system, Chandler has re-emerged as a force for the Mavericks.



Phil Jackson, the New York Knicks' president, who can jump into the free-agent market this summer after several contracts expire and the team falls below the salary cap, at Madison Square Garden in New York. The Knicks' future hinges on how they make out in the draft and who is willing to join their roster as a free agent.

(Ben Solomon/The New York Times)

different now, Stu Jackson said. As a coach, Phil Jackson sought daily solutions. As an executive, especially one who is trying to build something out of rubble, he has to resist the urge to placate the public's desire for immediate results. The Knicks have made rash decisions before.

"It's difficult," said Stu Jackson, an analyst for NBA TV. "But if you believe in your plan and your plan is sound, and the people that you work with believe in your plan, then you have to stick with it even in the face of negative feedback

Jose Calderon, Samuel Dalembert and Shane Larkin - three of the players the Knicks acquired from Dallas - were "on the court."

If it did not come off as a full-throated endorsement of those three players, Jackson added that the team had gotten off to a poor start because of injuries and that Chandler would not have "changed the outcome." Jackson went on to write that trades required time to evaluate: "Just relax ... and be patient."

That notion has become a familiar one around the

the plan. Nearly every player on the roster is expendable, and if Jackson can make deals that include receiving draft picks or players who fit his vision, or both, then he probably will. But he is not working with much. Few teams are salivating for J.R. Smith. Regardless, the Knicks will have deep pockets this summer. But building through free agency has its challenges.

Already, potential targets have moved on to new destinations. Kevin Love, playing in the final year of his deal, has indicated that

Yankees: Bold trade lands prospects

DAVID WALDSTEIN
© 2014 New York Times

The New York Yankees' roster is characterized by aging players, and the rotation is laden with pitchers returning from injuries, so the team sought to address both vulnerabilities with one bold trade this weekend.

In a five-player deal, the Yankees sent the versatile infielder Martin Prado and the young pitcher David Phelps to the Miami Marlins for Nathan Eovaldi, a hard-

The key to the deal for the Yankees was Eovaldi, who joins a rotation in need of stability. C.C. Sabathia is recovering from knee surgery, Masahiro Tanaka missed two months with a torn elbow ligament, Ivan Nova is not expected to come back from Tommy John surgery until midseason, Brandon McCarthy left for the Los Angeles Dodgers in free agency, and the promising Michael Pineda remains an unknown.

The Yankees traded one

threw 199 2/3 innings in 33 starts - more innings than any Yankee threw in 2014 (Hiroki Kuroda had 199), and more than Sabathia, Pineda and Nova combined.

Eovaldi was drafted by the Dodgers in the 11th round in 2008 and made his debut three years later at 21. He was a key figure in the July 2012 trade that sent Hanley Ramirez and Randy Choate to the Dodgers.

Eovaldi will join Chris Capuano, who re-signed



New York Yankees manager Joe Girardi talks about his team during a news conference at the Major League Baseball winter meetings in San Diego. The Yankees sought to address their vulnerabilities with one bold trade this weekend.

(AP Photo/Lenny Ignelzi)

throwing right-handed pitcher; Garrett Jones, a backup first baseman and outfielder; and a 22-year-old pitching prospect, Domingo German. In a separate move they acquired the right-handed pitcher Gonzalez German from the New York Mets for cash.

The Yankees will pay \$6 million to the Marlins to offset the \$22 million Prado is owed through 2016. Prado showed his value in his brief stay with the Yankees last season, but the Yankees needed to add a starting pitcher, and wanted to add youth to the roster.

"There's a risk with any deal we make," general manager Brian Cashman said. "But we are getting younger, we are getting more diversified, and hopefully when the dust settles it will prove out that we also got better. Time will tell."

young pitcher, Shane Greene, to the Arizona Diamondbacks for shortstop Didi Gregorius. With Eovaldi, who turns 25 on Feb. 13, the Yankees acquired a talented power pitcher with room to grow. The acquisition was made with the hope that he will improve on his record, which so far has not matched his potential.

"He's got a great gift - there's no doubt about that," Cashman said of Eovaldi, who can throw close to 100 mph. "Now it's just a matter of harnessing that gift."

Eovaldi was 6-14 with a 4.37 earned run average for the Marlins last season, when he also gave up the most hits (223) in the National League. His career ERA is 4.07, all in the NL, and he has been victimized by big innings. But last season he

with the Yankees this week, at the back of the rotation. Cashman said he still did not know if Kuroda planned to pitch this season.

Jones, 33, has a career .314 on-base percentage and a .764 on-base plus slugging average. He hit 27 home runs and 28 doubles for the Pittsburgh Pirates in 2012, and the Yankees are hoping his power numbers will increase, given the short right field at Yankee Stadium.

German has a career 2.33 ERA in five minor league seasons, none higher than Class A.

"He's a starter with big ability," Cashman said. "Our scouting reports say that if he reaches his potential, we will be very pleased by that. It's great to have another lottery ticket, so to speak, in the prospect category for us."

Keeping Score: Padres reshape roster, but results remain to be seen

BENJAMIN HOFFMAN
© 2014 New York Times

Without changing anything, the San Diego Padres were likely to improve next season. The entire lineup underperformed in 2014, and the team's poor season totals masked some improvement in the past few months.

Rather than waiting to see how much better the team would be if some of his players had more typical seasons, however, A.J. Preller, San Diego's general manager, reshaped the roster, trading a huge chunk of the farm system for Justin Upton, Matt Kemp, Wil Myers and Derek Norris.

Suddenly, a team of little-known underperformers had a group of household names with excellent credentials: five All-Star appearances, two Gold Gloves, four Silver Sluggers, a rookie of the year and two top-10 finishers in MVP award voting.

The Padres won the headline war, and excited their fan base, but it will take more than next season to judge the flurry of activity because of the potential of the prospects who were traded.

The more immediate issue is whether San Diego acquired as talented a group as many seem to think. Each player is capable of great things, and will make the Padres better next season, but there are reasons they were available in trades.

For Kemp, health is a concern. During the completion of the trade with the Los Angeles Dodgers, in which the Padres received \$32 million to offset the \$107 million remaining on his contract, he was found to have arthritis in his hips. A host of other injuries caused Kemp to miss 56 games in 2012 and 89 games in 2013. Any additional health worries are enough to question whether Kemp can ever return to his form in 2011, when he was probably the best player in the National League.

Kemp was worth 8.6 Wins Above Replacement in 2011, according to Baseball-Reference. Since then, his WAR was just under four for two seasons and below two for one season. That represents an upgrade for San Diego, but Kemp is entering his 30s and is no longer the dynamic wunderkind who burst onto the scene for the Dodgers in 2006. A permanent move to left field might help protect his body and reduce some of the damage his below-average play in center caused. The \$75 million the team will pay Kemp is the largest financial commitment in Padres history, so finding a way to keep him on the field is vital.

Upton, also an outfielder, is a lower risk than Kemp because of his sterling health history. But Upton also produced what is looking more and more like his career season in 2011: a 6.1 WAR to go with 31 home runs and 21 stolen bases. He finished fourth in the National League MVP voting (two places below Kemp) and seemed on his way to being one of the best players in the game.

Upton has been an effective player the last three seasons, worth an average of 2.7 WAR, but his reputation has outpaced his production.

The good news is that Upton, 27, is at an age when many players reach their physical peak. And his remarkable power for a player of his frame makes Petco Park, which has humbled many so-called sluggers, less daunting. Last season with Atlanta, Upton hit 17 home runs that traveled 400 feet or more, according to ESPN's home run tracker, including a 477-footer off Jenrry Mejia of the New York Mets that will not soon be forgotten.



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Brazil draws with US to win home tournament: AP

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — Brazil's women's soccer team held on for a 0-0 draw with the United States to win the International Tournament of Brasilia on Sunday.

Brazil had the tiebreaker in the final because it finished with the best result in group play at the four-team competition in the nation's capital.

Five-time world player of the year Marta and the rest of the Brazilians celebrated in front of a crowd of more than 11,000 at the Mane Garrincha, which hosted seven World Cup matches earlier this year.

Brazil controlled possession during most of the game but the Americans pressured late and almost scored a winner just before the final whistle when a header by defender Becky Sauerbrunn struck the crossbar after being tipped by Brazilian goalkeeper Luciana.

The U.S. also had a late goal disallowed for offside. Brazil appealed for a penalty earlier in the second half.

Brazil had won its previous three matches. It beat Argentina 4-0, the U.S. 3-2 and China 4-1. Marta scored a hat trick in the come-from-behind win against the Americans a week ago.

Abby Wambach, contending for this year's world player of the year award along with Marta, had a few chances off headers in each half.

The U.S. opened with a 1-1 draw against China and closed with a 7-0 rout of Argentina. It only qualified for the final because it had a better goal differential than China.

NBA Game of the Week: Thunder at Spurs

JONAH BROMWICH
© 2014 New York Times

Oklahoma City at San Antonio, Thursday, 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time, ABC.

The NBA has long hoped that basketball will become to Christmas what football is to Thanksgiving: the sport the whole family sits down to watch. Recently, though, a desire to turn Dec. 25 into a showcase for big-market teams like the New York Knicks and the Los Angeles Lakers has precluded the league from showing decent games.

This season, out of the day's five games, there are really only two worth tuning in for. If you're in the mood for some rollicking entertainment and are willing to stay up late, check out the showdown between the Golden State Warriors and the Los Angeles Clippers at 10:30. For those keeping to an earlier schedule, the game that should prove most compelling is between the Oklahoma City Thunder and the San Antonio Spurs.

San Antonio, the defending champion, has lost five of its last six games and sits in seventh in the Western Conference standings. Last week, playing without Tony Parker (hamstring), the Spurs became the first team in NBA history to lose two consecutive games in three overtimes.

But it is not unusual for the Spurs to start slow, and the team remains competitive. Their somewhat mediocre record (17-11) is largely due to the absence of some of last season's key contributors, which goes beyond coach Gregg Popovich's canny resting of his stars.

Marco Belinelli missed eight games in November because of a strained groin muscle. Tiago Splitter is

working his way back into the lineup after a calf injury forced him to miss 18 straight games, and Patty Mills, one of San Antonio's best young players, has not played this season because of a torn rotator cuff.

at the start of last season, and the team is getting contributions from formerly anonymous players on its bench, like point guard Cory Joseph and forward Aron Baynes. All of which is to say that fans should not

certainly remembered that it was Durant's right foot that had sidelined him earlier this season.

Durant missed Friday's game against the Lakers, and while the sprain is mild, it will be tough for



Oklahoma City Thunder Kevin Durant, left, drives the ball against Golden State Warriors' Draymond Green (23) and Andre Iguodala (9) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Oakland, Calif. For NBA fans keeping to an earlier schedule this Christmas, the game that should prove most compelling to watch is between the Oklahoma City Thunder and the San Antonio Spurs, Thursday, Christmas, 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time, on ABC.

(AP Photo/Ben Margot)

The injuries have forced the Spurs' aging stars - Parker, Tim Duncan and Manu Ginobili - to work harder than Popovich might like at this point in the season.

Despite its depth issues, San Antonio entered Sunday tied for the third-best defense in the league as measured by points per 100 possessions (99.3). And its offense - which has had a clear influence on the best units in the league, such as the Dallas Mavericks' and the Warriors' offenses - is as pass-happy as ever.

Duncan and Ginobili look healthier than they did

be surprised if, once a few players return from injury, the Spurs fight their way to the top of the standings, in time-honored tradition.

Then again, returning from an injury is not always so easy, as Kevin Durant and Oklahoma City found last week. Durant was on pace for a memorable game against the Warriors on Thursday, having scored 30 points in 19 minutes while going 10 for 13 from the field. But with less than five seconds to go in the first half, he sprained his right ankle. It was a scary moment for Thunder fans, who

Scott Brooks to decide how much to use his superstar going forward. Every game counts for the Thunder, who started the season 3-12 as Durant and Russell Westbrook missed time, but the last thing Brooks wants to do is overwork Durant and risk another injury.

Thursday's loss to Golden State was the first in eight games for the Thunder, who, when healthy, remain one of the best teams in the league. Over those eight games, they had a better point differential than any team but the suddenly streaking Atlanta Hawks.

Wall Street Wrap:

Junk-bond market tumbling along with oil prices

STEVE ROTHWELL
AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Oil's slump didn't just hit the stock market, it's shaken up the junk-bond market, too. High-yield bonds are on track for their worst drop in

The Barclays U.S. high-yield corporate bond index, a benchmark for the securities, has dropped 2.5 percent this month, after a 1.4 percent drop in November. If the index were to end December at that level,

includes corporate bonds with better credit ratings and Treasuries, is largely unchanged over the same period.

Junk bonds pay higher interest rates than U.S. government bonds and other

have high amounts of debt in comparison to their income.

The debt has been a favorite for investors who wanted higher levels of income. For energy companies trying to rapidly expand during the U.S. oil and gas boom, the junk-bond market had offered a way to bankroll their operations, even if they had weak credit.

Investors are now worried that a near 50-percent fall in oil prices will make it harder, if not impossible, for these companies to generate enough earnings to repay their debts. The market, which had an extremely low rate of defaults when oil traded around \$100 a barrel earlier this year, is now looking much riskier with prices below \$60.

It's not just energy company bonds that are falling. The slump in those bonds has made investors re-evaluate their other holdings of other high-yield bonds.

"You are starting to see energy and energy-related companies that have really re-priced in the last month, and that has weighed down on the market," said James Keenan, head of Americas credit at BlackRock. In the past week, you've seen "more pres-

sure on other parts of the market."

The market for risky debt was already on shaky ground this summer. With the Federal Reserve keeping its benchmark interest rate close to zero for more than six years, investors had been hunting for higher rates.

As bond prices rose, yields fell. In the case of junk bonds, the average yield fell from nearly 22 percent in November 2008, two months after the collapse of Lehman Brothers, to a record low of 5.7 percent this summer.

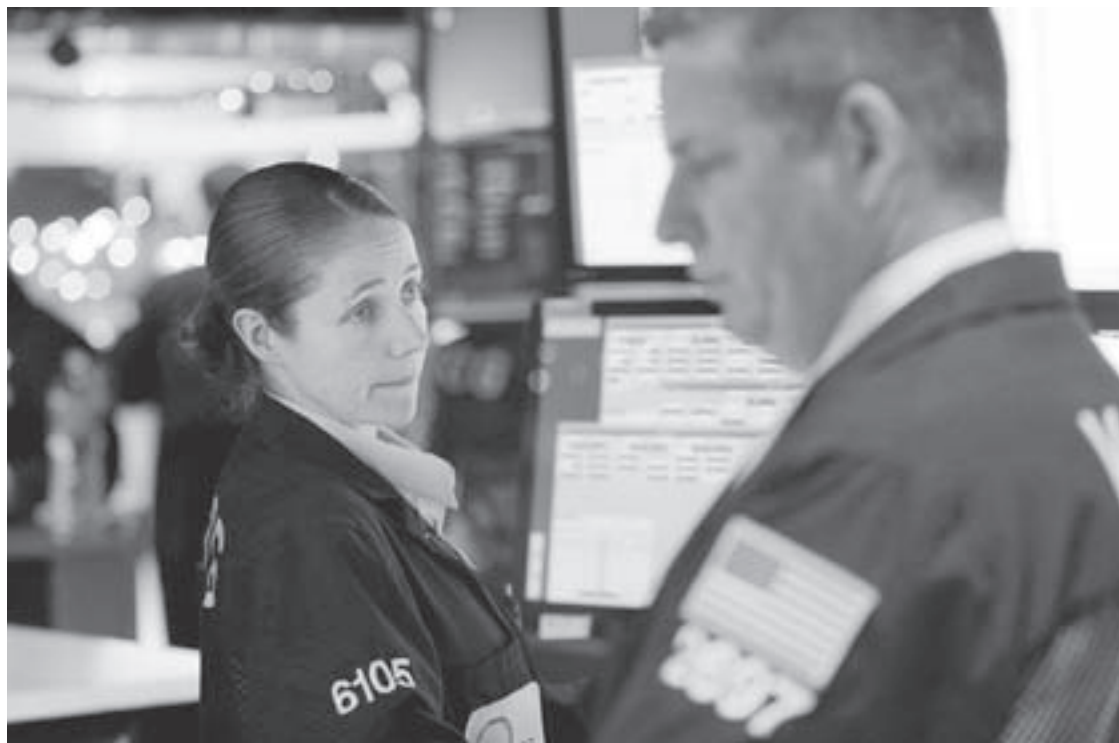
The robust demand for the bonds pushed yields down to record lows this summer. Investors started to become nervous that the risks of owning these securities was starting to outweigh the benefits.

Popular exchange-traded funds which invest in high-yield bonds are reflecting the slump. iShares' High Yield Corporate Bond ETF has dropped 1.3 percent this month, according to FactSet prices. State Street's comparable ETF is down 2.1 percent in the same period.

The sell-off should serve as a "wake-up call" for investors who had been buying the securities for the income while ignoring the risks, said Collin Martin, a senior Research Analyst, Fixed Income, at the Schwab Center for Financial Research.

"This is a reminder that it is a very risky asset class that is prone to very severe sell-offs," Martin said.

The high-yield sell-off this month has been so severe that about one third of high-yield energy bonds are now trading at "distressed" levels, according to Martin Fridson, Chief Investment Officer at Lehmann Livian Fridson Advisors LLC. That means that investors are demanding these companies pay them a yield that is at least 10 percent higher than the yield on a relatively safe U.S. Treasury as compensation for the risk.



Traders work on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange in New York. Oil's slump didn't just hit the stock market, but it shook up the junk bond market too. High-yield bonds are on track for their worst monthly performance in a year and a half after investors dumped risky securities issued by energy companies.

(AP Photo/Seth Wenig)

a year and a half after investors dumped risky securities issued by energy companies. Those bonds make up about 13 percent of the category.

it would mark the biggest two-month slump since June 2013.

By comparison, a broader Barclays index tracking the entire bond market, which

kinds of corporate debt because they are considered at greater risk of defaulting on their debt. That's because the companies that sell them generally

IPO Watch:

Juno, developer of a cancer treatment, excites

ANDREW POLLACK
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Excitement over a promise of a new type of cancer treatment ignited a frenzy on Wall Street late last week Friday as a little-known year-old company pulled off one of the largest initial public stock offerings in the biotechnology sector. The company, Juno Therapeutics, sold 11 million shares at \$24 each on Thursday in its initial public offering. The company increased its price and the number of shares offered earlier that day after a surge in demand.

When trading started on Fri-

day, the stock soared, closing at \$35 a share, up 46 percent, and giving Juno a market valuation of about \$2.7 billion.

Juno, based in Seattle, is working on sophisticated treatments that genetically engineer the body's immune cells so they can better recognize and kill cancer cells. Its approach has been tried so far on a relatively small number of patients, but the results have been extraordinary. Some people with leukemia have been rescued from near-certain death. A study of one of Juno's drugs found an 89 percent remission

rate among 27 adults with acute lymphoblastic leukemia no longer responding to other treatments.

Juno has collaborations with the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, Seattle Children's Research Institute and the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York, and they could be in for a windfall if the company succeeds.

In addition to the usual royalties and milestone payments that companies pay to suppliers of technology, Juno will make "success payments" to the Hutchinson center and Sloan Ket-

tering if the company's stock is above certain prices at certain points in time. The total payments could be as much as \$375 million for the Hutchinson center and \$150 million for Sloan Kettering.

Even before raising \$264 million its public offering, Juno had raised more than \$300 million privately, a large amount for such a young firm. One early investor was Jeff Bezos, head of Seattle-based Amazon. Juno's largest shareholder, with about a 30 percent stake, is a fund that invests the state of Alaska's oil revenue.

America, Who Are We?



CHARLES M. BLOW
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Last week I spoke at a seminary and graduate school in New York about the protests following the grand jury decisions in the Michael Brown and Eric Garner cases.

It was invigorating and inspiring to be among so many young people with so much passion about social justice, young people beginning to feel their power as change agents and brimming to exercise it by disrupting the status quo.

However, I couldn't help noticing a disturbing sentiment echoed in a few of the questions about the value of voting. One gentleman even said something to this effect: "It doesn't make a difference whom you put in office because the office is corrupt."

I couldn't disagree more. Voting is not some fruitless, patrician artifact from a bygone era. It is not for those devoid of consciousness and deprived of truth. It is an incredibly important part of civic engagement. No politicians are perfect, but neither are they all the same. The sameness argument is an instrument of deceit employed by the puppet masters to drive down the electoral participation of young idealists.

We don't vote for people because they are the exact embodiment of our values, but because they are likely to be the most responsive to them.

Also, there has been too much blood spilled, too many bodies buried in the struggle to expand the franchise of voting in America for us to cavalierly shrug it off. And the effort to constrict the pool of eligible voters is too well organized and too well financed for anyone to see his or her vote as lacking value.

And yet, I do understand the bulging frustration that the political system can foster.

I understand the feelings of these young protesters who are chafing at our current representative democracy and yearning for - yelling for - more direct democracy in which "the people" make direct demands and direct decisions, possibly circumventing an admittedly polarized-to-the-point-of-paralysis federal legislative system.

Protests are a form of direct democracy. But direct democracy works best at the local level, like town hall meetings. It is far more challenging and unwieldy when national policy changes are

sought.

I understand the fundamental questions being raised in these protests and others. There is an emotional declaration: The system is broken. There is also a moral, philosophical question: Who are we?

Are we - or better yet, should we be - a nation that tortures detainees, or targets and kills U.S. citizens with drones, or has broad discretion to spy on the American public? Should we be a country hamstrung over how to deal with millions of undocumented immigrants, or our gun violence epidemic, or our growing income inequality? Should we be a country that accepts bias in its criminal justice system, a country of mass incarceration and a country where so many young black men can be killed by the police?

Who are we?

That is a very real question. Who are we now and who do we aspire to be? Do we aspire to the ideas enshrined in our founding documents? Do we truly believe the Declaration of Independence?

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

If so, then we must do as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. exhorted this nation to do in his Mountaintop speech: "Be true to what you said on paper."

King continued: "Somewhere I read of the freedom of assembly. Somewhere I read of the freedom of speech. Somewhere I read of the freedom of press. Somewhere I read that the greatness of America is the right to protest for right."

He read those things in the First Amendment of the Constitution. America is still straining, against corporatist, elitist, exclusionary forces, to be true in practice to what is clearly written on paper. Representative democracy is not a perfect form of government. It can be fragile and subject to corruption, the only guard against which is unwavering vigilance. But it is a grand idea, exquisite because of its fragility, and deserving of every effort to make it more perfect.

Who are we? We are America - impossibly strong, illogically optimistic, eternally hopeful. This is a laboratory in which one of the greatest experiments in human history is still underway. We can be whoever we want to be, dare to be, dream of being.

We are the young people in the streets, who shout out and die-in for the right to be treated equally and to live freely. We are people who must know that the voice and the vote are mutual amplifiers, not mutually exclusive. □



Confronting An Ugly Killer



FRANK BRUNI
© 2014 New York Times

My maternal grandmother lives in my memory as two distinct images. Two distinct people, really. The first: She's coming off a plane, and she's in a pillbox hat, a tailored suit and white gloves. That was how she dressed to fly, back in the days when people actually dressed to fly. We'd meet her at the airport, then drive home in a car suffused with Jungle Gardenia, which wasn't just her scent. It was her armor and ecosystem, the way she told the world and reassured herself that she was a proper lady.

The second image: She's on the couch in our TV room. Her blouse has come undone. So have her slacks, which are wrinkled and smudged. She's spilling out of everything and she's oblivious, a dazed, haunted look in her eyes. If she's wearing any Jungle Gardenia, I no longer smell it.

These images are separated not just by years but by illness. My grandmother, Kathryn Owen Frier, developed Alzheimer's. It turned a fastidious woman with a fiendish talent for crosswords into a slovenly one who couldn't figure out a stoplight. I remember how mortified I felt for her, how quickly I turned my eyes away. And I remember how awful I felt for having that reaction.

She died more than a quarter-century ago. For a long time afterward, I rejected any impulse

to write about the way she went, worried that I'd somehow be dishonoring her.

But the world is different now. Much of the unwarranted shame surrounding Alzheimer's has lifted. People are examining it with a new candor and empathy.

If most Oscar handicappers are correct, the next Best Actress statuette will go to Julianne Moore for her heartbreaking work as a university professor battling early-onset Alzheimer's in "Still Alice," to be released nationally next month. And while Moore isn't the first star to shed a light on the disease - Judi Dench in "Iris" and Julie Christie in "Away From Her" also did so - her performance comes amid other intimate portraits of the toll that Alzheimer's takes.

A new documentary, "Glen Campbell: I'll Be Me," chronicles its recent impact on the singer who made "Rhinestone Cowboy" a megahit in the 1970s.

And one of the most acclaimed novels of 2014 is "We Are Not Ourselves," by Matthew Thomas, which hinges on an agonizing case of Alzheimer's. The book became an instant best-seller.

"As baby boomers approach their 70s and Alzheimer's disease becomes increasingly commonplace, more and more fiction writers are attempting to reach into that obscure space," noted Stefan Merrill Block in The New Yorker last August.

Block himself reached into it for his first novel, "The Story of Forgetting," in 2008. The novel "Still Alice," on which the movie is based, was published around that time and went on to sell more than a million copies.

Its author, Lisa Genova, told me that its success underscores not only how many families have been touched by Alzheimer's but how many had been trapped in silence. "Any disease of the brain has a stigma," she said. "It's not

like the heart or the kidney. This is something that's wrong with YOU."

After "Still Alice" came out, she was struck by all the real-life stories that people suddenly shared with her. Thomas had the same experience when he promoted "We Are Not Ourselves."

"I was surprised by how willing people were to be vulnerable," he told me. Alzheimer's was something that they desperately needed to talk about.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, an advocacy group, the estimated number of Americans with the disease will rise from more than 5 million now to as many as 16 million in 2050, and the cost of caring for them and older Americans with other forms of dementia could reach \$1.2 trillion annually.

Angela Geiger, the association's chief strategy officer, calls Alzheimer's "the unaddressed public health crisis of this decade." And she told me that while there have been significant increases in federal funding for research, current spending doesn't adequately reflect the disease's status as the sixth leading cause of death in this country, one for which there's "no treatment that slows the progression."

It's a hellish riddle, eroding the identities of those it afflicts and depriving us all of our cherished illusions of control. "Alzheimer's disease is the opposite of modern life," wrote Thomas, whose father had it, in Time magazine. "It's the ascendancy of entropy and chaos."

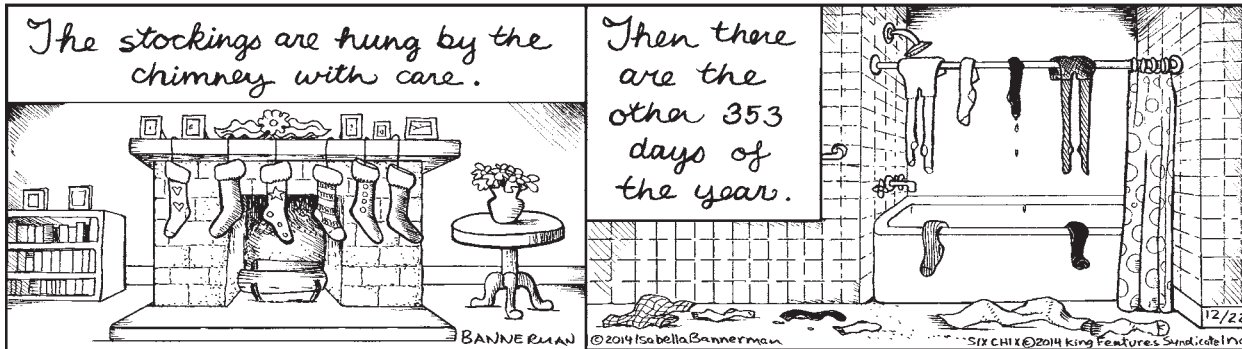
It's not perfumed. It's not gloved. But it's what happens to many people and will happen to too many more, especially if we don't stare unblinkingly at it.

"If we're shy about it, then we don't have a sense of urgency," Genova said. We're conquering the shyness. With the urgency, we have a ways to go. □

Mutts



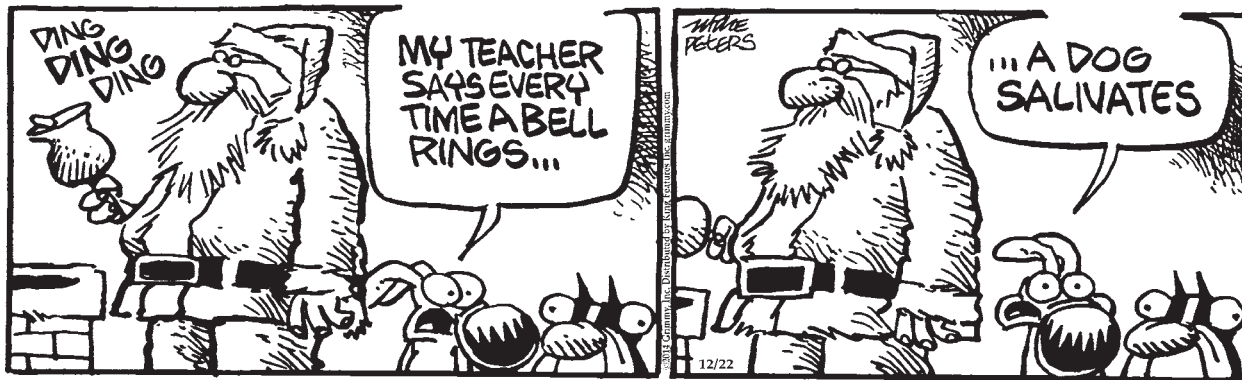
6 Chix



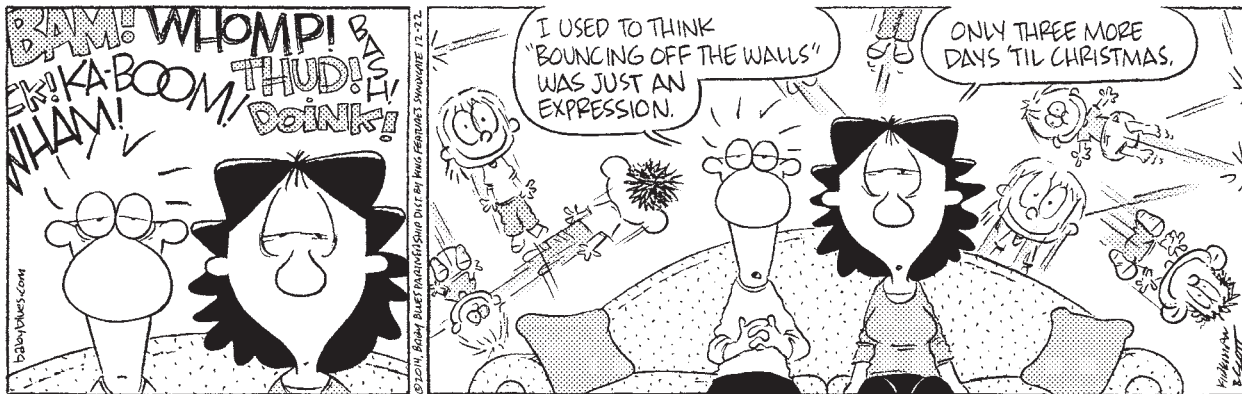
Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

4							8
	1	5	4		9	3	6
	9		8		5		4
		4		3		5	
3							6
		1		5		2	
	8		9		2		3
	3	9	1		7	8	2
2							7

Difficulty Level ★

12/22

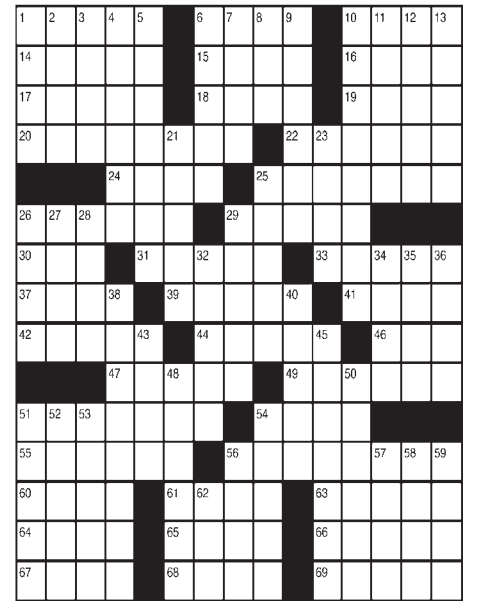
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Saturday's puzzle answer

6	3	2	7	8	4	1	9	5
4	8	1	2	9	5	6	7	3
9	7	5	6	3	1	4	2	8
7	1	6	8	5	3	9	4	2
5	4	3	9	6	2	7	8	1
2	9	8	4	1	7	5	3	6
3	6	9	5	4	8	2	1	7
8	2	4	1	7	6	3	5	9
1	5	7	3	2	9	8	6	4

ACROSS

- 1 Humble
- 6 Extend across
- 10 Spoils; defaces
- 14 See eye to eye
- 15 Vigorous
- 16 Bread spread
- 17 Actress Garbo
- 18 Dollar bills
- 19 Singer Horne
- 20 Guards
- 22 USPS inquiry to find an item lost in transit
- 24 Loose ___; bits of unfinished business
- 25 Consecrates
- 26 Trash can
- 29 Sunflower ___; healthy snack
- 30 Orang or chimp
- 31 Amounts owed
- 33 Big department store chain
- 37 Adriatic & Red
- 39 Underground plant parts
- 41 Pig's dinner
- 42 Foreigner living abroad
- 44 Staircase piece
- 46 Huge bird from Australia
- 47 Reasonable thinking
- 49 Henpecked
- 51 Church leaders
- 54 Dirt
- 55 Hun leader
- 56 Lasts
- 60 Maize
- 61 Conceited
- 63 Boise's state
- 64 ___-highs; long socks
- 65 Omelet maker's purchase
- 66 Adamant refusal
- 67 Stitches
- 68 Misplace
- 69 Say hello to



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/22/14

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

MISS	ACMES	FROM
ABLE	SUAVE	IOWA
TEAL	TREAT	GLEN
EXPLOIT	DUCHESS	
	OUR	DEPOT
CLOUT	BID	LEADS
LINT	SAS	HERNIA
OBI	CARACAS	DAB
TROJAN	BAD	GENE
HANOI	OLD	CESAR
	UNITE	FOE
CURRENT	NIT	WITS
UPON	CABIN	HORA
LOPE	AWAKE	ITIS
PREY	SANER	ZAPS

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12/22/14

- 3 Architect Christopher
- 4 ___ carrier; mailman
- 5 Longed
- 6 Footwear
- 7 Skillets
- 8 Tavern drink
- 9 Shift around to get comfy
- 10 Thick syrup
- 11 Guinness and Baldwin
- 12 Ms. Zellweger
- 13 Zooms skyward
- 21 Couch potato
- 23 Communists
- 25 Outperforms
- 26 First, second, third or home
- 27 High point
- 28 Gather crops
- 29 Unflinching
- 32 Yeltsin or Karloff
- 34 Costs an arm and
- 35 Italy's capital
- 36 Tater
- 38 Soda crackers
- 40 Spanish man
- 43 Saw or wrench
- 45 Elevating
- 48 Driveway coat
- 50 Plane without an engine
- 51 Gets ready for a trip
- 52 Make amends
- 53 Scatter
- 54 Good judgment
- 56 ___ out; gorges
- 57 Hang on to
- 58 "My Country, 'Tis of ___"
- 59 Type; variety
- 62 In the past

Biblical ages

Continued from page 28

According to the Bible, it was the home town of Goliath, the giant whom young David laid flat with stone and sling.

But Finkelstein, co-author of a book arguing that "tenth-century Jerusalem was a small highland village that controlled a sparsely settled hinterland" rather than the great kingdom the Bible describes David and his son Solomon as ruling, was unconvinced by Hardin's broader conclusion. It's too far from Jerusalem — about 70 miles — to make connections, he said, and radiocarbon dating for the part of the Iron Age described could be anywhere from mid-10th century to 800 B.C.

"There is no reason to start rewriting history books that come from modern critical research," wrote Finkelstein, who wrote "David and Solomon: In Search of the Bible's Sacred Kings and the Roots of the Western Tradition" with journalist and archaeology historian Neil Asher Silberman.

Carbon dating that period is problematic, Hardin said, so pot fragments from the layers where the bullae were found are being analyzed at the University of Minnesota's Center for Rock Magnetism to see if magnetic analysis can date them more precisely. They were found at Khirbet Summeily (KHEER-bit soo-MAY-lee), "a little site in middle of nowhere, outside of Philistia and outside Judah," Hardin said. In modern terms, it's about 14 miles east of Gaza.

Hardin said he first went there three years ago, expecting to find a tiny farming village that might indicate what kind of people lived along a border where fortresses from the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. have been excavated. A village would have been made up of houses with two or three parallel, narrow rooms, each about 8 to 15 feet long, with a broad room across the back; artifacts might include serving dishes and cooking and

storage pots, he said. He was stunned when students turned up not only six broken bullae but a large, beautifully made chalice; a softball-sized figure of an animal's head; scarabs, and several small figurines, possibly of Egyptian gods. Two of those figurines are of turquoise-glazed faience, a sand- or quartz-based ceramic made before clay was glazed and fired. "My colleague Jeff Blakely worked at Tell el-Hesi — a nearby Iron Age site — during the 1970s and '80s. In our two-and-a-half seasons we've found more Egyptian material than they found at El-Hesi in probably 10 or 12 six-week seasons, digging with anywhere from 50 to 100 people," Hardin said. The scarabs and figurines likely are from the 11th or 10th century B.C., he said. He said he and Blakely, an adjunct professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center for Jewish Studies, had brought 45 to 50 students this year for what was planned as an extensive 5-week dig but had to cut it short.

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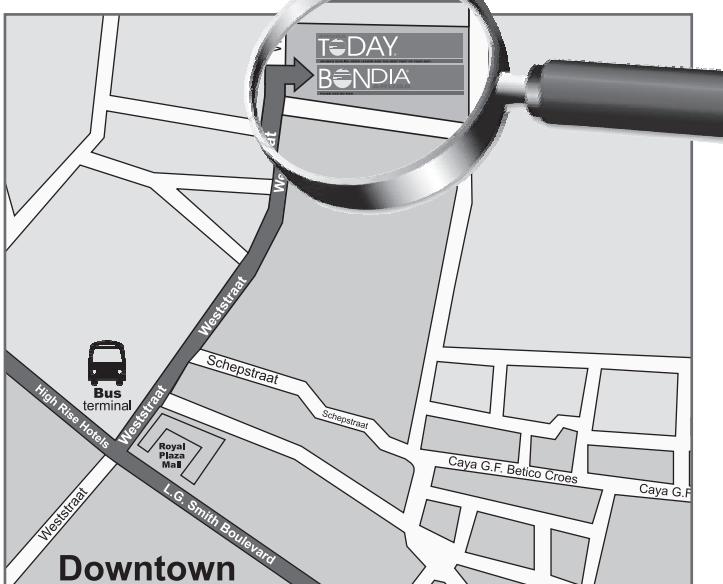
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24/7

AP: Ancient clay seals shed light on biblical ages

JANET McCONNAUGHEY
Associated Press

Impressions from ancient clay seals found at a small site in Israel east of Gaza are signs of government in an area thought to be entirely rural during the 10th century B.C., says Mississippi State University archaeologist James W. Hardin. This could indicate that Biblical accounts of David and his son Solomon described real kings rather than the backwater chieftains considered more likely by some archaeologists, said Hardin, an associate professor in the department of anthropology and Middle Eastern cultures. The six fragments of clay, once used to seal documents or expensive goods, are described in a brief article in the December issue of *Near East Archaeology*. "They're little bitty mud balls but they're really important because of what they suggest about what's going on," Hardin, the lead author, said in a telephone interview from the university in Starkville.

After tying the scroll or other item, ancient officials would wrap part of the string with clay and stamp it with an official seal to show that it had not been opened. The artifacts are important, said Israel Finkelstein, an archaeology professor at Tel Aviv University. They "probably hint at" a city-state other than that of Gath on the southern coastal plain during the period, he wrote in an email to *The Associated Press*. Gath was a major Philistine city-state when it was destroyed in the 9th century, according to archaeologists.

Continued on page 27

Entrepreneur builds sleek new 'Ghost Ship'

DAVID SHARP
Associated Press

KITTERY, Maine (AP) — Even on land, the Ghost looks futuristic and fast.

The angular vessel looks like a waterborne stealth fighter. It rides atop underwater torpedo-shaped tubes powered by a pair of 2,000-horsepower gas turbine engines. Gyroscopes keep the ride smooth.

Sadly, Ghost is all revved up with no place to go. The brainchild of a wealthy inventor and entrepreneur, Ghost might never be a familiar household name like Humvee or Apache — even if it works as advertised — because its creator built a warship the Navy isn't convinced it needs.

"It's a revolutionary program," said Gregory Sancioff, founder and CEO of Juliet Marine Systems. "Nothing like this has ever been built by anybody, not even the Navy."

He might be right: The Ghost rides on struts connected to engine assemblies he says take advantage of "supercavitation," traveling underwater inside a bubble of gas. It's a new application of technology that Sancioff insists will make Ghost fast — it's so far hit about 35 mph (56 kph) but Sancioff believes it can approach 60 mph (96.6 kph) — while staying stable even in rough seas. Sancioff has taken the usual step of sinking \$15 million into a prototype that he hopes to sell to the Navy, turning upside down a process in which normally the military identifies a need before soliciting proposals and seeking funding.

"The Navy is pretty skeptical of what we've been working on but they're starting to take us more seriously," said Sancioff, whose company operates out of

a leased warehouse at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Sancioff, who as a young man raced hydroplanes, hatched his idea for the 60-foot (18-meter)-long vessel after terrorists using a small boat full of explosives nearly sank the USS Cole in 2000 off the coast of Yemen.

He thinks the Navy needs

an airplane when it's turning. He was so convinced that he created a company and built it.

That sort of entrepreneurial spirit used to drive military innovation but it's no longer the norm in an era of high-tech, costly programs. These days, the Pentagon decides its military require-

Sancioff insists the military has expressed at least some interest in his company, which counts retired Navy admirals and one former U.S. senator, John Sununu of New Hampshire, as board members.

"Any time you're building something so different, you're going to find people



Greg Sancioff talks about the design of the "Ghost," his newly designed warship vessel, on the grounds of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. Sancioff put up some of his own money to build the warship, now they just need to find a buyer.

(AP Photo/Jim Cole)

a fast patrol boat to protect larger and more costly warships when they're most vulnerable, like when they're passing through the Strait of Hormuz at the southern end of the Persian Gulf. The Ghost's smooth ride makes it an ideal platform for weapon systems — and for transporting Navy SEALs, Sancioff said.

Supercavitation has been used to produce high-speed torpedoes but Sancioff said he's adapted it for the first time to propel a surface warship. Under his design, dual propellers were moved to the front instead of the rear and underwater ailerons control the vessel, which banks like

ments and then solicits proposals.

The Navy currently does not have a requirement for such a patrol boat, said Chris Johnson, spokesman for the Naval Sea Systems Command.

But Sancioff's design is at least worth a look, even if it turns out to be unfit for military use, said retired Vice Adm. Pete Daly, CEO of the U.S. Naval Institute, an independent, nonpartisan organization in Annapolis, Maryland.

"The propulsion system could be valuable in other applications," Daly said. "You've got to keep that door open to innovation," he said.

that just don't understand it. You've really got to spend some time understanding what's going on here," Sancioff said.

It could be a tough sale. Even in the best of times, the Navy is predisposed to buy larger, multi-missions ships instead of smaller niche vessels. And the Navy's current budget struggles pose perhaps the biggest obstacle.

Sancioff is also proposing marketing his vessel to other navies and wants to build a new version that'll be a bit bigger. He believes it will be flexible enough for other tasks, like anti-submarine and mine warfare operations.

'Hobbit' wins weekend box office battle with \$90M debut

JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — While Hollywood continued to wrestle with the fallout of the Sony hacking scandal, the weekend box office offered the solace of a moviegoing truism: Hobbits sell. Peter Jackson's final installment of his six J.R.R. Tolkien adventures, "The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies," debuted with \$56.2 million over the weekend and \$90.6 million since opening Wednesday, according to studio estimates Sunday. For an industry reeling from the cancellation of "The Interview" and terrorist threats against moviegoers, Middle-earth offered reliable refuge.

Aided by popularity on Imax screens, "The Battle of the Five Armies" dominated the pre-Christmas frame with a five-day haul similar to the franchise's previous entry, "The Desolation of Smaug," even if

its actual debut weekend was notably less than both prior "Hobbit" movies. In its second week of release overseas, Warner Bros.' "Five Armies" added \$105.5 million to bring its two-week global total past \$350 million.

Jeff Goldstein, head of domestic distribution for Warner Bros., said the healthy weekend of moviegoing was a welcome respite after an "upsetting and so disturbing" week.

"Not only did we do business in places that I would expect, like the West Coast, we did business everywhere in the country," Goldstein said. "We didn't see that on the prior two 'Hobbits.'"

Another final installment in a trilogy, "Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb," opened in a distant second place. The Fox comedy, which features Robin Williams' final performance, took in \$17.3 million, well

off the pace of previous franchise entries. The franchise's previous debut was \$54.2 million for 2009's "Night at the Museum: Bat-



Martin Freeman appears in a scene from the film, "The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies."

(AP Photo/Warner Bros. Pictures, Mark Pokorny)

tle of the Smithsonian." Sony Pictures, which on Wednesday shelved the Dec. 25 release of the North Korea satire "The Interview" following hacker threats of violence against theaters showing the film, unveiled its other holiday option. The

studio's "Annie" remake, starring Quvenzhané Wallis as the titular orphan, opened with \$16.3 million.

"It was nice shot in the

bled to fourth place with \$8.1 million in its second week. The Fox release slid a dramatic 67 percent.

Heading into one of Hollywood's most lucrative weekends of the year, the Christmas box office will be without its top comedy option in "The Interview," directed by Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg. The film had been expected to take in about \$25-30 million. With one major release now out of the mix, that will leave more room for the Disney musical "Into the Woods," Angelina Jolie's World War II tale "Unbroken" and "The Hobbit."

"There's a huge opportunity there," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for box-office tracker Rentrak. "There's enough product out there to give it a very satisfying, Christmas holiday leading into the new year. Yeah, we are down one film, but it's a nice mix of films out there."

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Craig Ferguson says good night as 'Late Late Show' host

FRAZIER MOORE
AP Television Writer

(as Ferguson was fond of but proper credit was never given to the people who



Craig Ferguson appears in Los Angeles. Ferguson will spend tomorrow's future yesterdays (as his theme song proclaims) somewhere other than "The Late Late Show." Friday Dec. 19, 2014 was his last hoorah after a decade as host of the CBS talk show.

(AP Photo/Dan Steinerg, File)

NEW YORK (AP) — Scottish-born comedian Craig Ferguson has enjoyed his last hoorah after a decade as host of "The Late Late Show" on CBS.

And what did we learn

hour)? Maybe that it was Bob Newhart all those years disguised as Secretariat the Pantomime Horse? Secretariat has long been a popular member of the "Late Late Show" stable,

brought him to life. That mystery was answered — well, sort of — on Friday's final episode. As Ferguson chatted with his robot sidekick, Geoff, he pondered who it might be

inside the horse costume. "Lift up your head, let's see who you really are," he called across to Secretariat, who was watching from his stall, stage left. Off came the head of the costume to reveal Bob Newhart. "What are you doing here?" the astonished Ferguson asked. "Hey, guy, it's YOUR dream," replied the comedy legend, spoofing the classic final scene from his sitcom, "Newhart," a quarter-century ago. In this case, Ferguson woke up from his dream in bed beside Drew Carey. Had his entire 10 years on "The Late Late Show" all been imagined? Ferguson's going-away party also featured former "Tonight Show" host Jay Leno as his sole guest. "Just two guys with nothing to do," summed up Ferguson. "They may take our talk shows," Leno chimed in parodying Mel Gibson's

line as a Scottish rebel in "Braveheart," "but they will never take our freedom!" The show kicked off with a pre-taped rendition of "Bang Your Drum," a song by the Scottish band Dead Man Fall, with Ferguson accompanied by dozens of celebs (many of them former guests) including Matthew McConaughey, Betty White, Samuel L. Jackson, Larry King, Regis Philbin, Jane Lynch, Quentin Tarantino, Jimmy Kimmel, William Shatner and even Archbishop Desmond Tutu. It then transitioned into the studio for a full production number with Ferguson backed by a rock band and choir. Ferguson's send-off followed by a day the splashy exit of Stephen Colbert and his series "The Colbert Report" from Comedy Central after nine years on the air. Colbert is headed to CBS to take over "Late Show" from David Letterman, who retires May 20. □

Happy times: Elton John, David Furnish get married in England

GREGORY KATZ
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Entertainer Elton John and long-time mate David Furnish officially married Sunday on the ninth anniversary of the day they entered into a civil partnership. The couple converted their civil bond under new laws implemented in England earlier this year that allow same-sex marriages. On Sunday the couple posted an Instagram picture of themselves preparing to sign official documents. "That's the legal bit done. Now on to the ceremony!" they wrote. John and Furnish planned a celebration at their estate near Windsor Castle west of London. An A-list crowd is expected — even if the festivities are likely to be much more sedate than the parties in John's hell-raising rock 'n' roll days. The singer — known for an impressive string of hits dating back decades — prom-

ised to post pictures of the festivities to fans around the world. The nuptials came as no surprise: John had tweeted about his plans earlier in the week, and earlier in the year had praised England for embracing same-sex marriage. He said there had been a remarkable change in a country where homosexual acts had long been deemed criminal offenses. John said the wedding would be a joyous occasion shared with the couple's two sons, Zachary and Elijah. The menu was traditional and posh, featuring wild mushroom soup with truffle cream, beef short rib with caramelized onion pie and warm chocolate pudding with vanilla ice cream for dessert, according to a photo of the menu posted by Brooklyn Beckham, son of soccer star David Beckham and designer Victoria Beckham. □

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